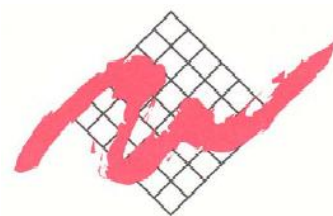


The Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa (SWMENA) Project

Focus on Morocco | Social Attitudes Toward Women
Topic Brief

*A project by the International Foundation for Electoral
Systems (IFES) and The Institute for Women's Policy
Research (IWPR) with funding from the Canadian
International Development Agency (CIDA)*



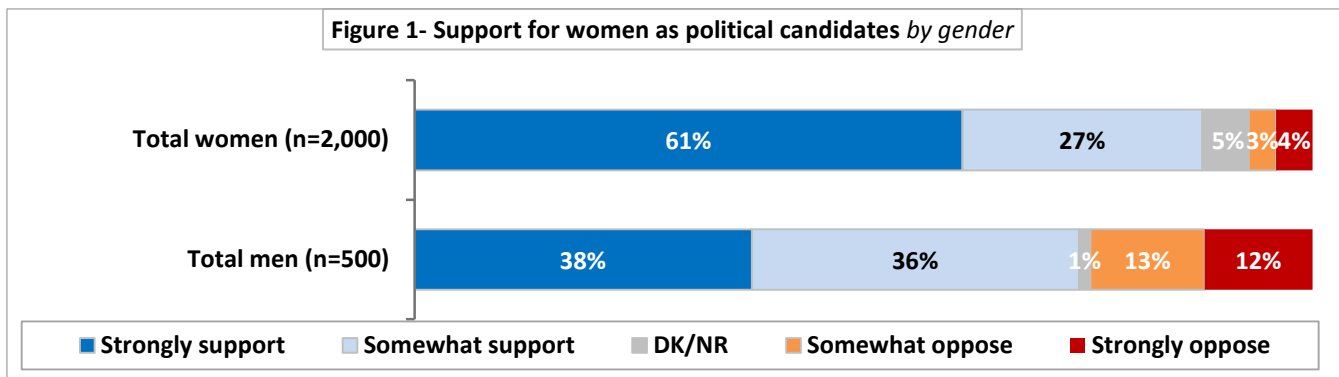
SOCIAL ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN

Before conducting the SWMENA survey, NGOs in Morocco that work on several aspects of women’s issues completed a short survey to identify their data needs. One of the main challenges identified by these groups is the stereotypical view of women’s image in Morocco in terms of their role in family and society. These groups identified the conservative or male-dominated mentality that restricts women’s role to marriage, child-bearing, and servicing the husband and the family as one of the main issues facing women in Morocco. These women also mentioned the weak presence of women in decision-making positions as an obstacle facing Moroccan women. Women in both political and private sector institutions, including women in political parties and parliament, don’t have significant decision-making weight and some NGOs believe that women in political parties tend to be just exploited for political marketing and remain marginalized within these parties.

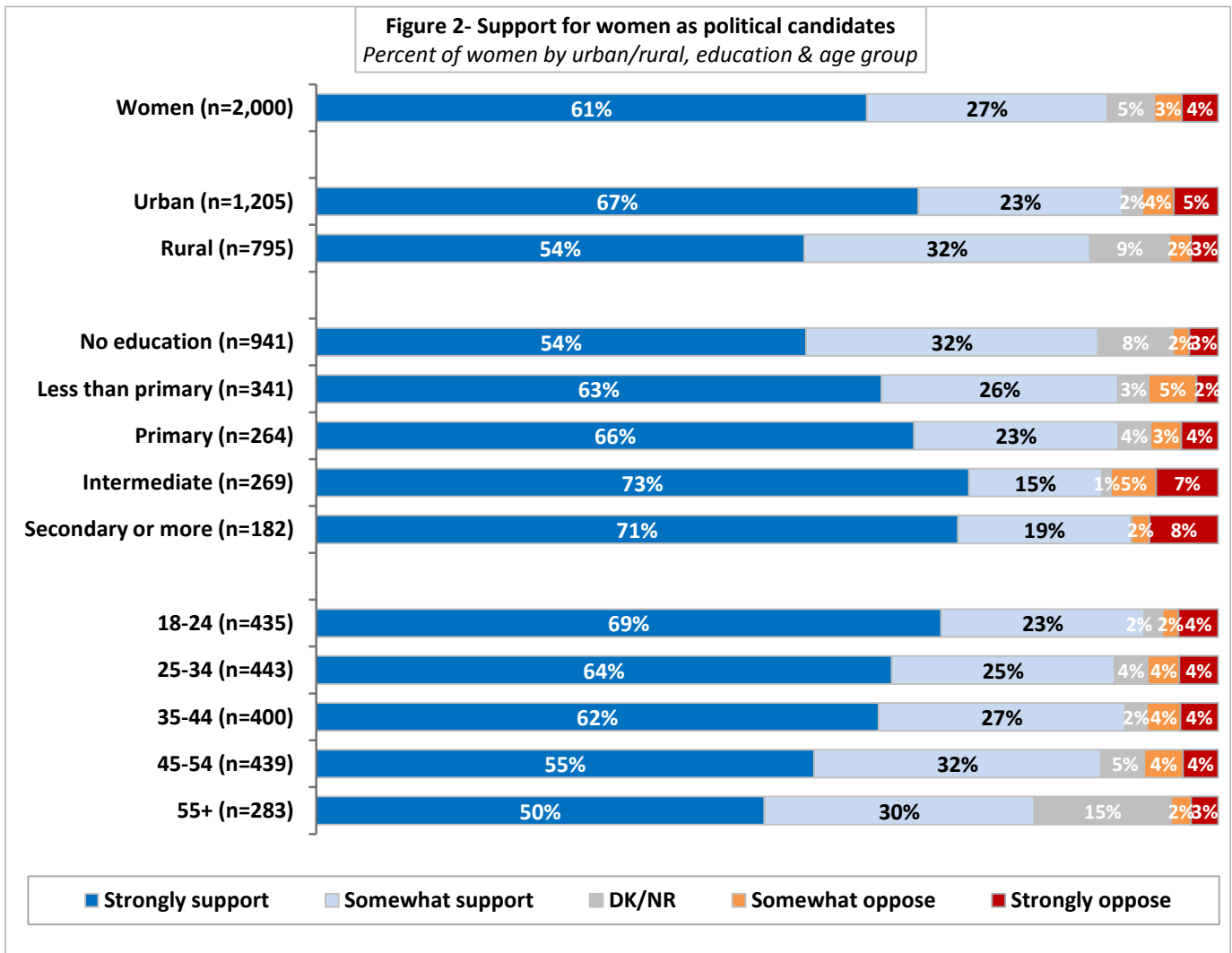
Consequently, we introduced a series of questions in the SWMENA survey to gauge social attitudes toward women. To get a sense of these attitudes, we asked questions such as support for women in politics, support for daughters in politics, allowing women to work outside the home, support/opposition for women involved in decision-making positions, and others. These questions give a sense of mentalities between groups in society such as between genders and between women of urban/rural areas, education levels, and age groups.

Opinions on Women’s Involvement in Politics & Decision-Making Positions

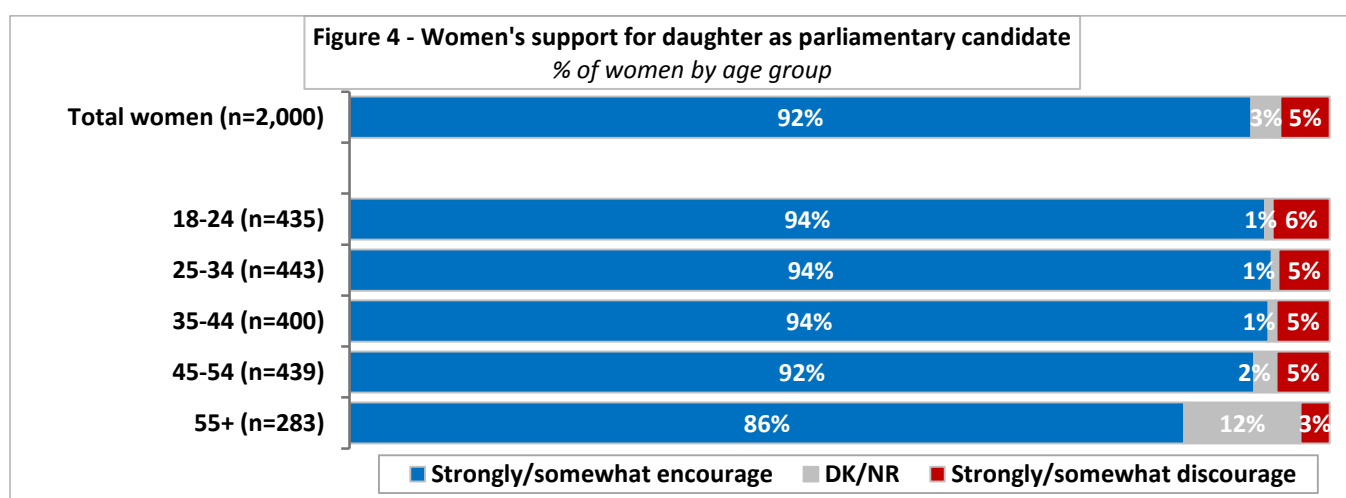
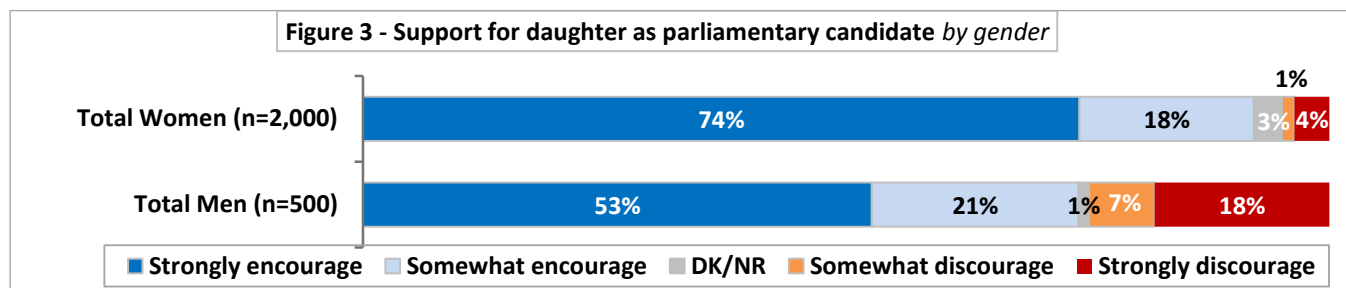
- Survey data suggests that there is a fairly high level of support for women becoming involved in politics as candidates for office, but women are much more likely than men to strongly support women in politics as political candidates. Figure 1 shows that while a majority of men (74%) and women (88%) strongly/somewhat support women as political candidates, women are more likely than men to strongly support women in politics (61% and 38% respectively).



- While a majority of Moroccan women support women as political candidates, there are differences in the intensity of opinions between women in different age groups, education levels, and urban/rural areas. Women aged 18 through 54 are more likely to *strongly* support women in politics than women over age 55. In fact, nearly twenty percent more women in the 18 to 24 age group strongly support women as political candidates compared to women aged 55 and older (69% and 50%, respectively). As education levels increase women’s intensity of support also increases. Women with primary education and above are more likely to strongly support women as political candidates (66% primary education, 73% intermediate education, 71% secondary or more education) than women with no education (54%). Also, more women in urban areas strongly support women as political candidates (67%) than women in rural areas (54%) (Figure 2).



- When asked whether they would encourage a daughter (if they have one or supposing they have one) to become involved in politics, there is also strong support for a daughter to become involved at both a local and national level. Women are more likely than men to encourage a daughter to become involved in politics as a parliamentary candidate (92% and 74%, respectively) and as a municipal candidate (92% and 74%, respectively) (Figure 3).
- Again, we see the same trend of women ages 18 to 54 more supportive of a daughter in politics as a parliamentary candidate than women ages 55 and up. However, women ages 55 and older are more likely to be unsure of whether they would encourage or discourage a daughter from running for parliamentary office with 12% saying they don't know (Figure 4).



Respondents who say they would discourage a daughter from becoming involved in politics as a municipal or parliamentary candidate were then asked to explain why.

- Of those women who say they would not encourage a daughter to become involved in politics as a municipal or parliamentary candidate, their first and third-most cited responses involve traditional views of women's abilities and roles, while the second most-cited response relates to disillusionment with Moroccan politics/politics in general. The most cited response is that politics is difficult for women (36%), followed by the belief that politics only involves problems/corruption (27%), and the belief that women should not work outside the home (24%). The next reasons cited by women are that they do not care about politics (13%) and the desire that a daughter would do other important things rather than politics (5%).

- Of men who would discourage a daughter from becoming involved in politics, the first most-cited response is based on traditional views of gender roles and the second most-cited reason, consistent with women's second most-cited reason, is based on issues they see with Moroccan politics/politics in general. Of men who would discourage a daughter from politics, 55% say it is because they believe women should not work outside the home (more than double the percentage of women's citing this), followed by 28% saying politics only involves problems/corruption, 21% say it is because politics is difficult for women, 12% say they believe she should do other important things rather than politics, and 5% say it is not permitted in their cultural/religious convention (Figure 5).

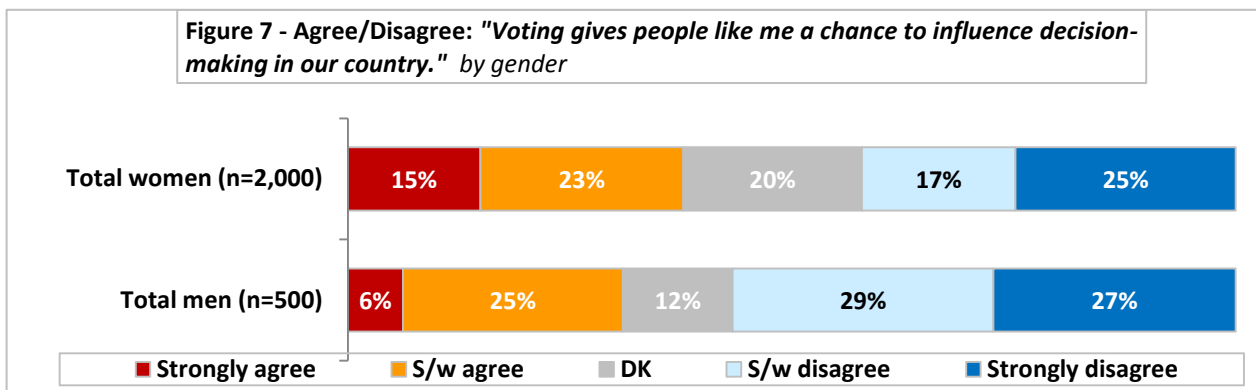
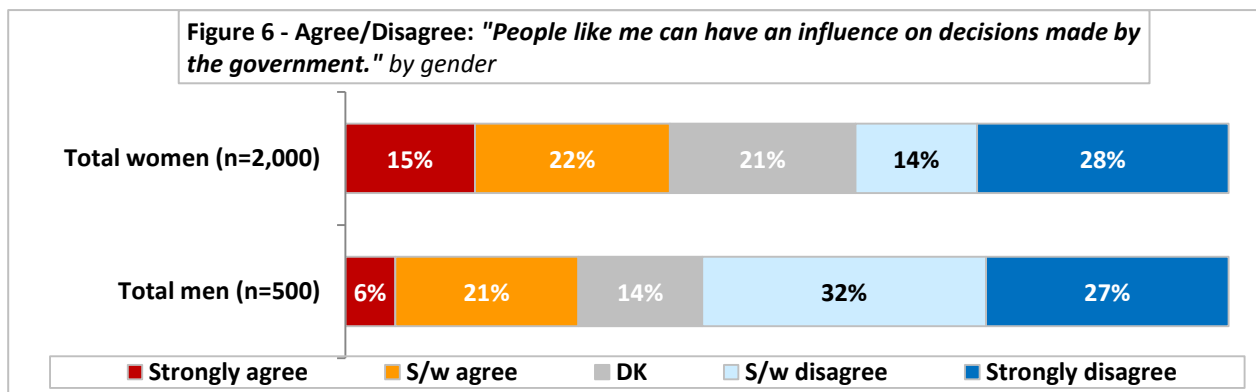
Figure 5 - "Why would you discourage your daughter to become involved in politics as a candidate?"
 Percent of men and women who answered "strongly or somewhat discouraged" to question on daughter's involvement in politics

	Women (n=104)	Men (n=124)	Ranking according to men's responses
1) Politics is difficult for women	36%	22%	(3)
2) Dissatisfaction with politics in general/in Morocco (Politics only involves problems/corruption)	27%	28%	(2)
3) Women should not work outside the home	24%	55%	(1)
4) Do not care about politics	13%	Not stated	N/A
5) Should do other important things rather than politics	5%	12%	(4)
6) Moroccan woman not wise/not qualified to be leader	2%	4%	(8)
7) Not permitted in their cultural/religious convention	1%	5%	(6)
8) Politics is difficult for poor people	Not stated	6%	(5)
9) No equal opportunities in ministry/in countryside only male candidates win	Not stated	5%	(7)
10) It should be equal seats for men and women in parliament	1%	Not stated	N/A

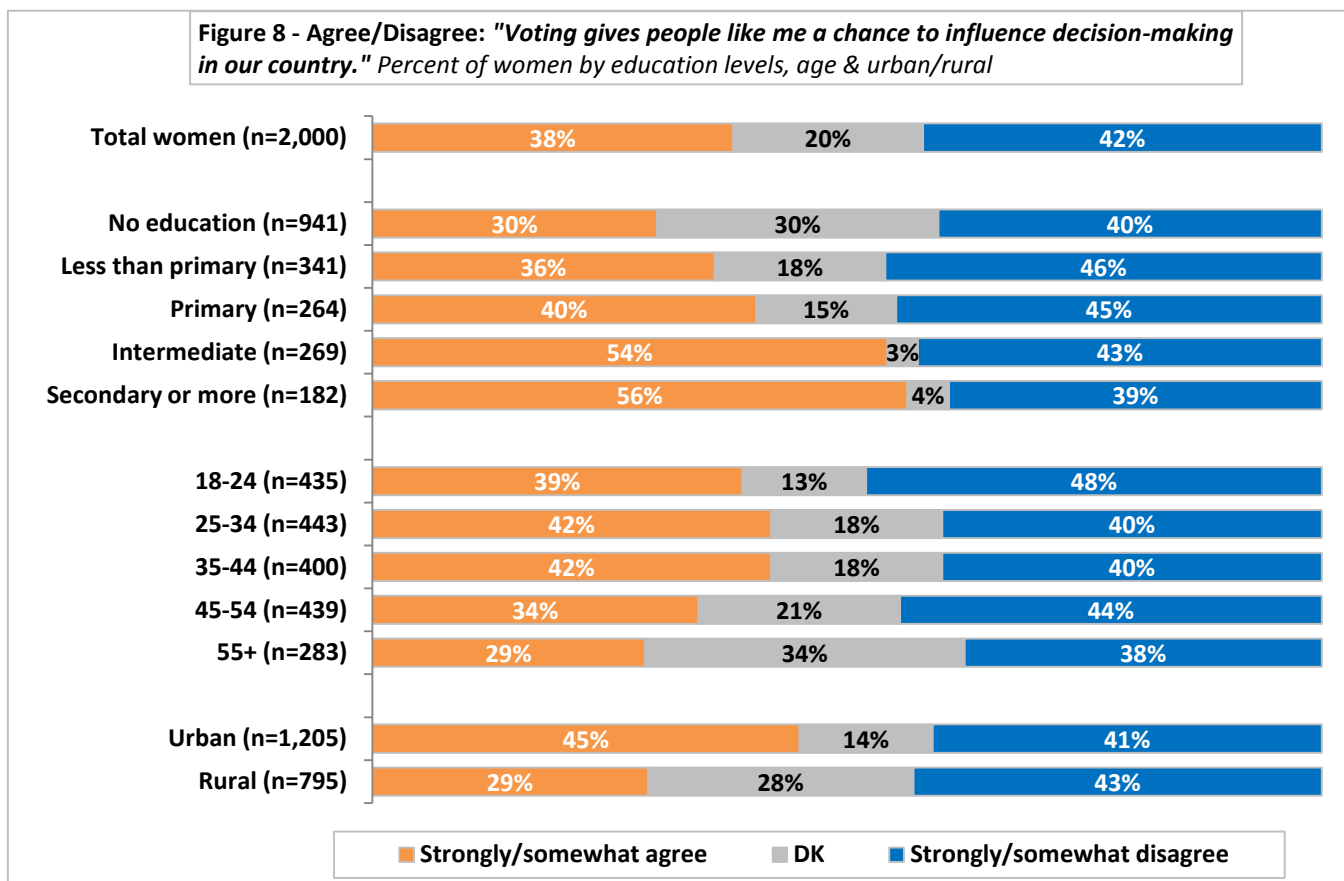
Opinions on Voting, Influence & Decision-Making

Respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with a series of statements about perceived influence of voting and decision-making in the government, and women’s autonomy in decision-making.

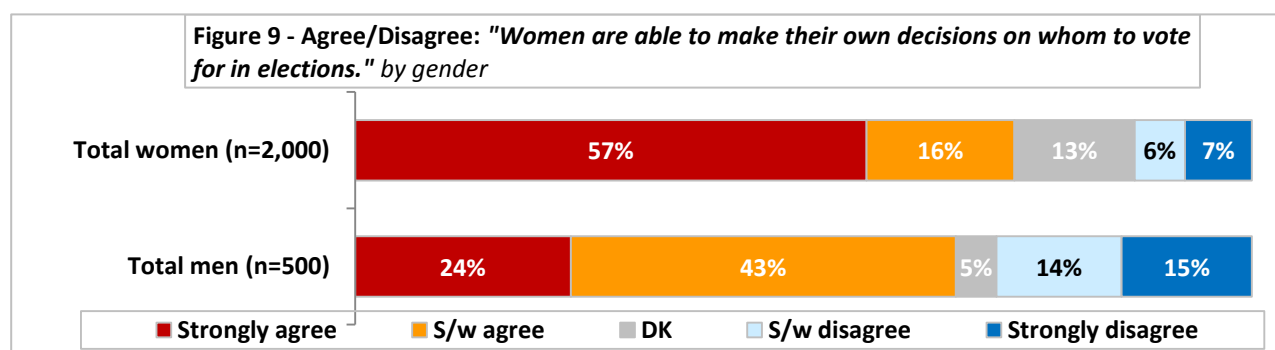
- Women and men both have mixed assessments of whether, “People like me can have an influence on decisions made by the government.” Forty-two percent of women strongly/somewhat disagree and 59% of men strongly/somewhat disagree that they can influence decisions made by the government (Figure 6). Only 26% of men and 37% of women strongly/somewhat agree with this statement, and 21% of women and 14% of men say they don’t know.
- When framed in a way that asks specifically about whether they think voting gives them a chance to influence decision-making in their country respondents are equally pessimistic. Only 38% of women and 31% of men agree that voting gives them a chance to influence decision-making (Figure 7). Forty-two percent of women and 56% of men disagree.



- Belief in the power of the vote, however, increases with education levels for both men and women. Majorities of women with intermediate education (54%) and secondary or more education (56%) strongly/somewhat agree voting gives them influence (Figure 8). Similarly, almost half of men with secondary or more education agree voting gives them influence (49%).
- By age group, we see younger women aged 18 to 24 disagree in the power of their vote (51%) more than women in other age groups. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that 34% of women aged 55 and older say they don't know whether their vote gives people like them a chance to influence decision-making in their country. Between women in urban areas and women in rural areas, 45% of urban women compared to 29% of rural women agree their vote gives them influence. Still, a quarter of rural women (28%) say they don't know if voting gives them influence and this is double the percentage of urban women who say they don't know (14%).

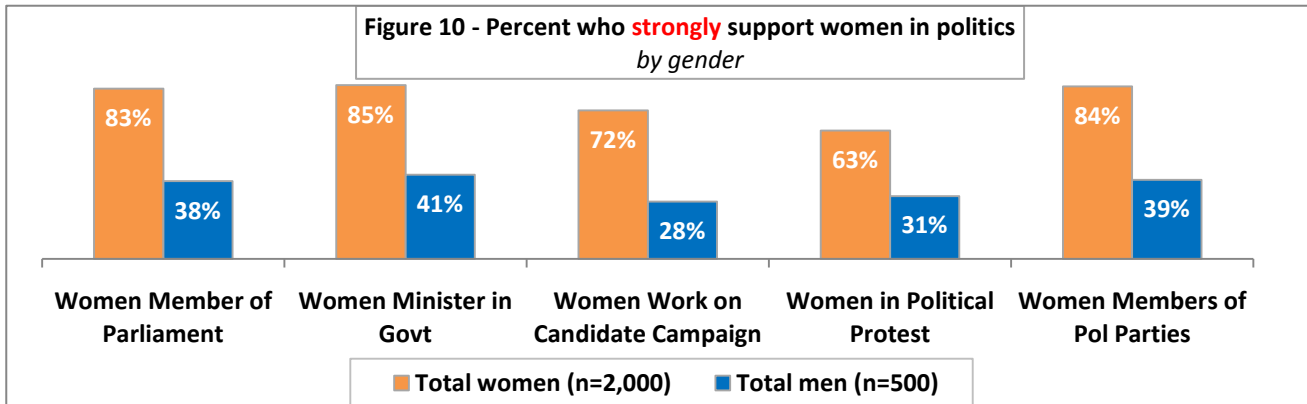


- Regarding women’s ability to freely make their own decisions when voting, a majority of men and women, with more women than men, strongly or somewhat agree with this statement (73% and 67%, respectively). However, more women *strongly* agree with this statement (57%) than men (24%), with men more likely to only somewhat agree with this statement (43%) than women (16%) (Figure 9). Between women there are slight variations in intensity of opinion. By age groups, there are not statistically significant differences except women ages 55 and older are most likely to say they don’t know (23%) than women in any other age group. By educational attainment, women with some education (64% less than primary education, 62% primary education, 66% intermediate education, 65% secondary or more education) are more likely than women with no education (50%) to strongly agree women can make their own decisions when voting. Sixty-two percent of urban women strongly agree compared to 52% of rural women. Also, 20% of rural women say they don’t know compared to only 8% of urban women.



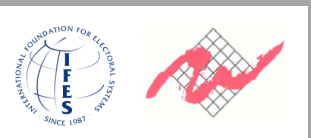
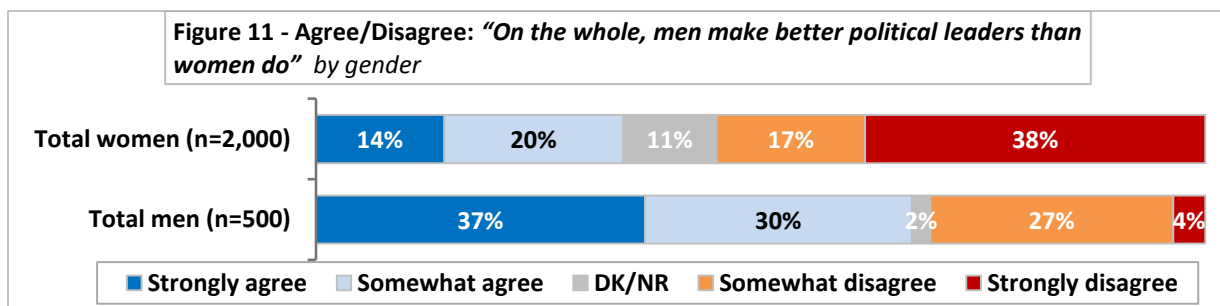
- When asked about women’s involvement in various aspects of politics, majorities of both men and women strongly agree that women should be involved in politics at a variety of levels. Yet, statistically significant differences appear between the percentage of men who strongly agree and women who strongly agree with women in these roles, as seen in Figure 10. There are also statistically significant differences between men and women who strongly/somewhat oppose women as members of parliament (24% men oppose, 5% women oppose), ministers in government (24% men, 5% women), working on candidate campaigns (37% men, 13% women), participating in political protests (37% men, 18% women), and members of political parties (25% men, 5% women). Despite majorities of men who support women in these roles, the percentage of men who oppose, and the difference between genders, is significant when examining potential attitudinal barriers to women’s participation in these types of activities.
- When aggregating opinions on the involvement of women in different aspects of the political process, regardless of the type of process, we find that 77% of women support women’s involvement in all five of these political roles, 8% support women in four of these roles, 8% support women in three of these roles, 1% support women in two of these roles, less than 1% only support women in one of these roles and 6% of women do not support women’s participation in any of these roles.
- On the other hand, we see men are less likely to support women in all of these roles and more likely to not support women in any of these roles. When looking at men’s support of women’s involvement in different aspects of the political process, the data shows 51% of men support women’s involvement in all five of these political roles, 14% support women in four of these roles, 9% support women in three of these roles, 2% support

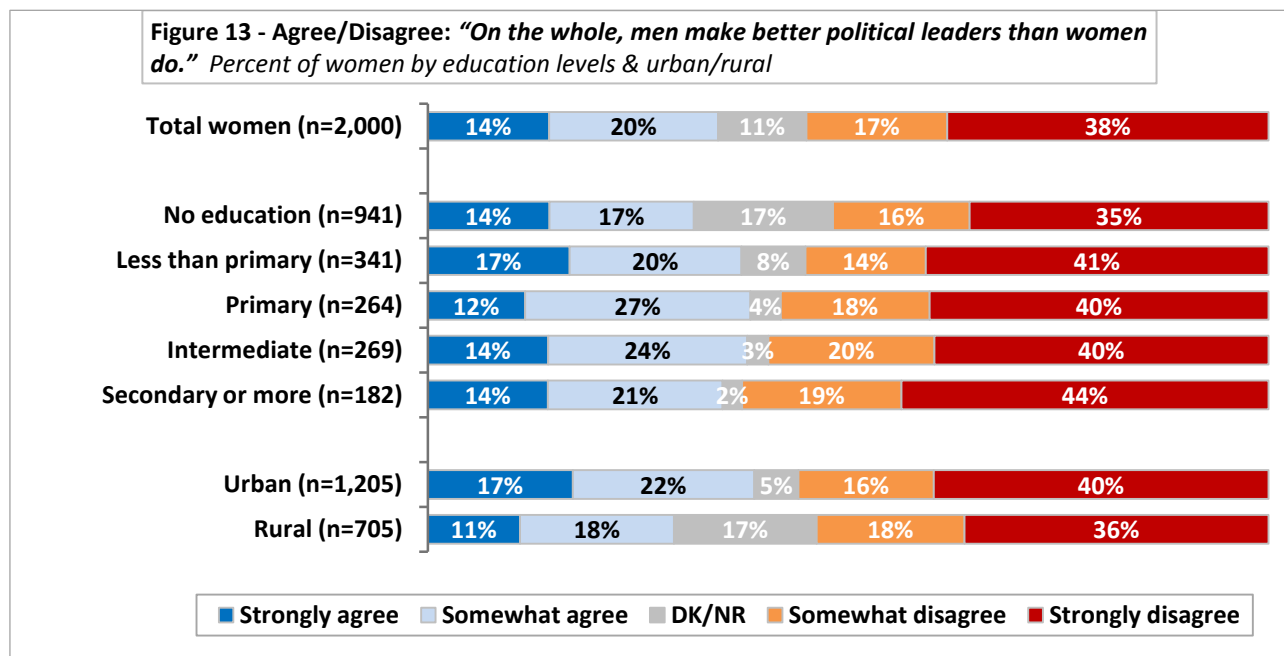
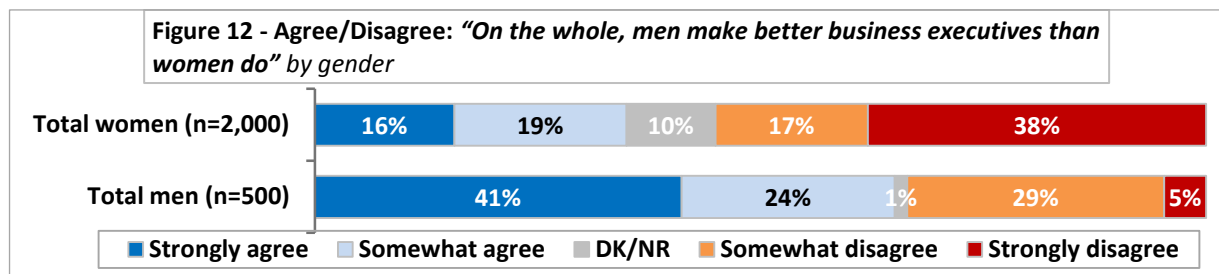
women in two of these roles, and 5% support women in one of these roles. Meanwhile, two in ten men (20%) do not support women’s participation in any of these roles.



In contrast, while men and women may believe women should be involved in politics and in political leadership positions, men are still viewed as better business executives and political leaders by a significant percentage of both men and women.

- When respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statements “On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do” and “On the whole, men make better business executives than women do,” the data shows a significant gender difference in opinions on these questions (Figure 11 and 12). A majority of men agree that men are better political leaders (67%) and business executives (65%) than women whereas a majority of women (55%) disagree with these statements that men are better political leaders or better business executives. Still, it must be noted that a significant share of women agree men make better political leaders than women do (34%) and men make better business executives than women do (35%). Education levels amongst women do not seem to impact this perception, nor does it matter if women live in urban or rural settlements (Figure 13). Participation in the work force also does not impact women’s opinions on whether men make better business executives in any significant way. Sixty-one percent of working women disagree compared to 54% of non-working women.
- These findings highlight the fact that this traditional stereotype of men being better in leadership roles continues to exist throughout Moroccan society, not just among men but among some women as well. This pervasive perception in society by both men and some women may tend to keep more men in these positions and can hinder women from attaining these types of leadership positions.

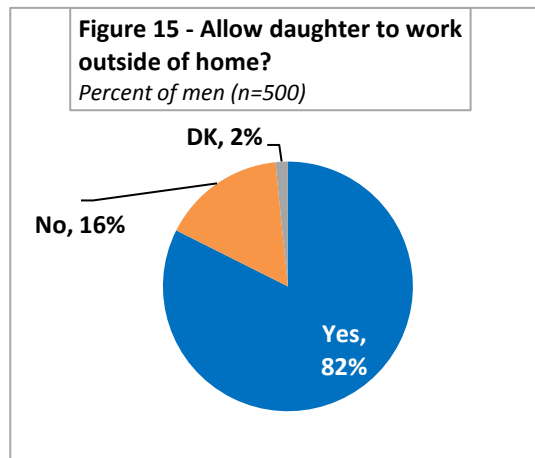
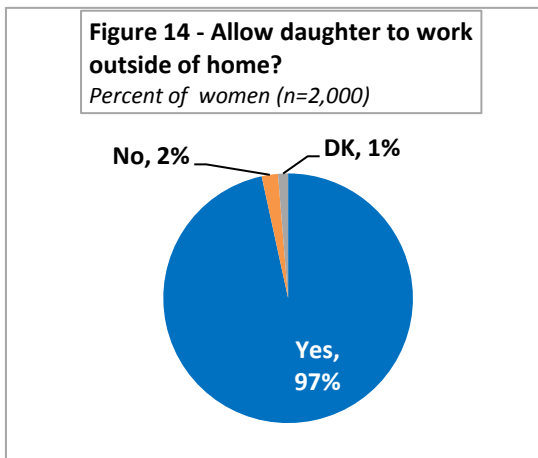




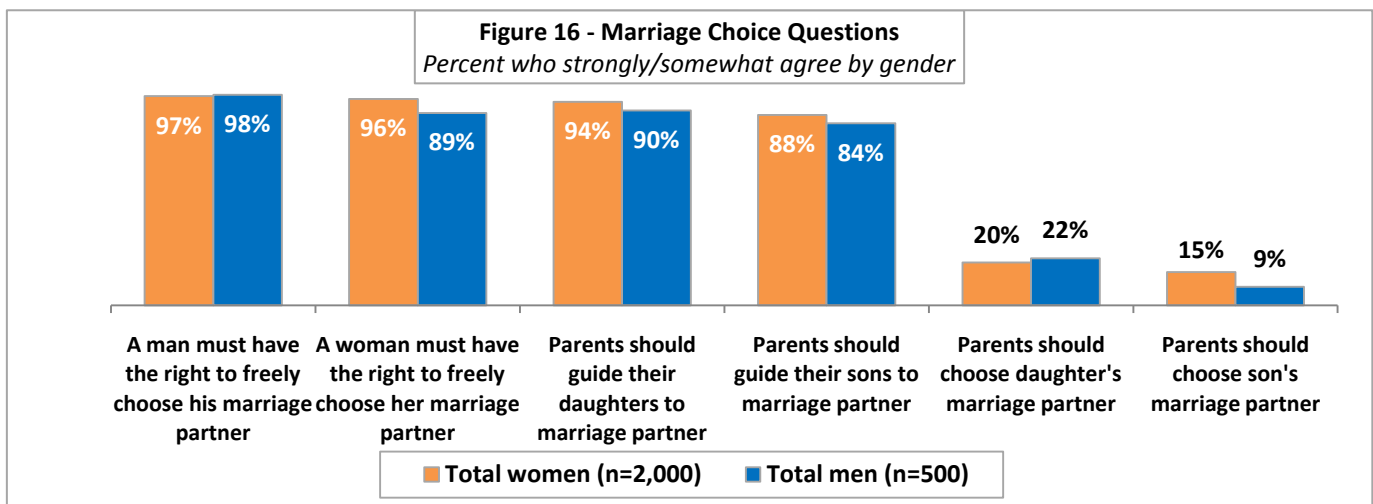
Opinions on Rights and Autonomy of Women

SWMENA survey respondents were also asked a series of questions aimed at understanding dynamics between women and men, husbands and wives, and parents and daughters in areas such as economic equality, and women’s autonomy in decision-making.

- Respondents were asked how they feel about a daughter working outside of the home. Figures 14 and 15 show that both a majority of women and men say they would allow their daughter to work outside the home if she chose to do so, but women are more likely to say yes than men (97% and 82%, respectively). It is noteworthy, however, that eight times as many men as women say they would not allow their daughter to work outside the home (16% and 2%, respectively). Also, more men in urban areas say they would allow their daughter to work outside the home (86%) than men in rural areas (78%).
- Of men who say they would not allow a daughter to work outside the home, 72% say they would not allow their daughter to work outside the home say it is because women should tend to the home and children, 13% say it is because she should focus on getting married, 11% say because it could be dangerous for them, and 9% say there are no appropriate jobs for women.

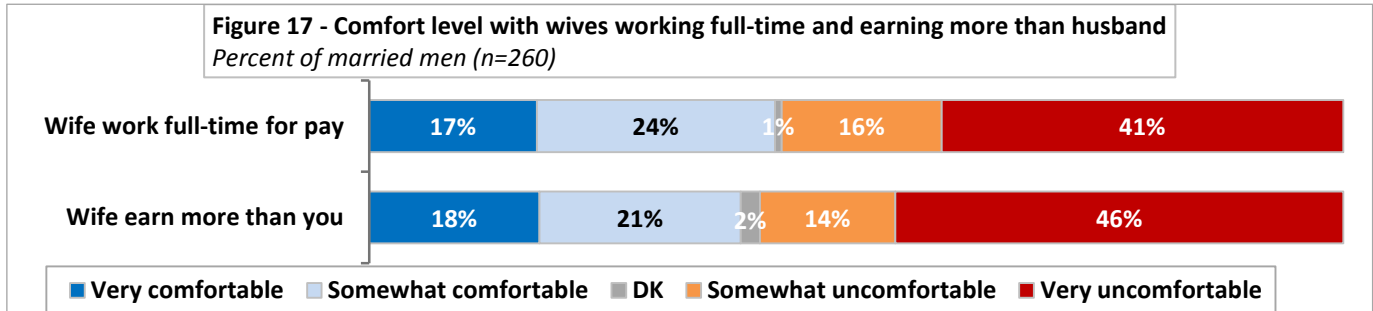


- When respondents were asked about women’s freedom in choosing marriage partners and parents involvement in that process, there is a sense from both men and women that women and men should freely choose their marriage partners with guidance from their parents, but not chosen by their parents (Figure 16). This shows the respect for women’s and men’s ability to make free decisions in regards to marriage, however, the strong family structure is reflected in the high majorities of both men and women who say that parents of both sons and daughters should have a role in at least guiding their children. Still, less men than women (89%, 96%) agree that women must have the right to freely choose their marriage partner and nearly 10% more men agree that men should have this right (98%) than men who agree women should have this right (89%). Also, we see double the percentage of men agreeing parents should choose their daughters’ marriage partner than men who believe parents should choose a son’s marriage partner (22% and 9%, respectively). These findings highlight a difference in opinions between men and women regarding perceptions of sons having more freedom of decision making in marriage choices than daughters do.



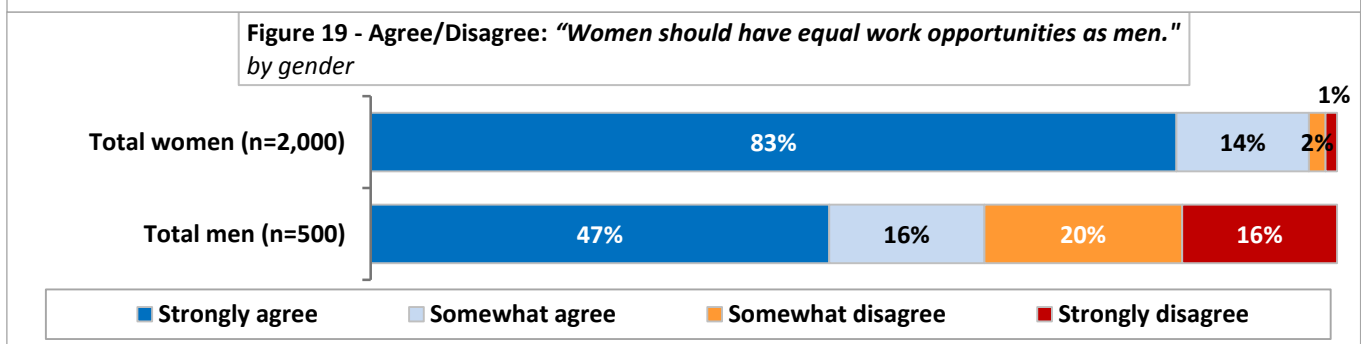
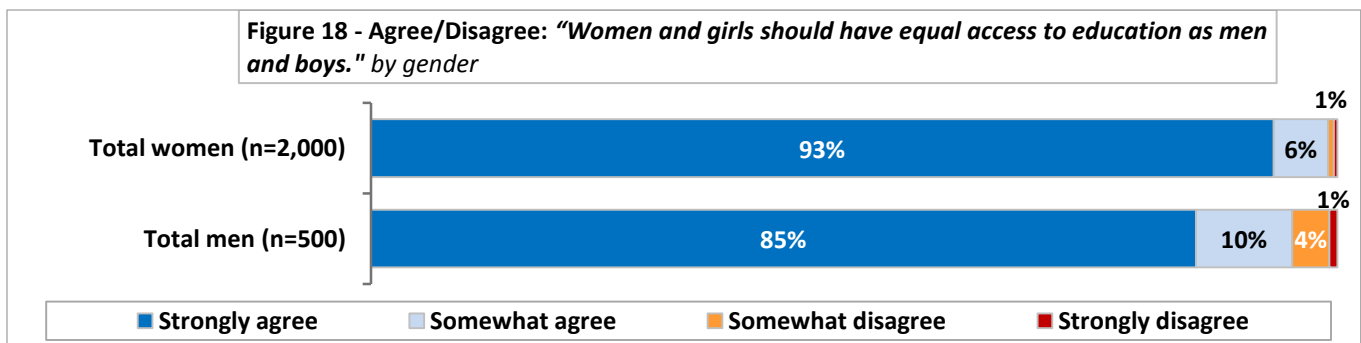
- Married men were asked about their comfort level with their wife working full-time with pay and with their wife earning more than them. The data shows husbands are still mostly uncomfortable relinquishing their role as the primary breadwinner in the family. A majority of married men say they would be very/somewhat uncomfortable

(58%) with their wives working full-time for pay and a majority of married men (60%) say they would be very/somewhat uncomfortable if their wife earns more than them. Still, four in ten married men say they would be very/somewhat comfortable if their wife worked full time for pay (42%) or if she earned more than him (38%) (Figure 17).

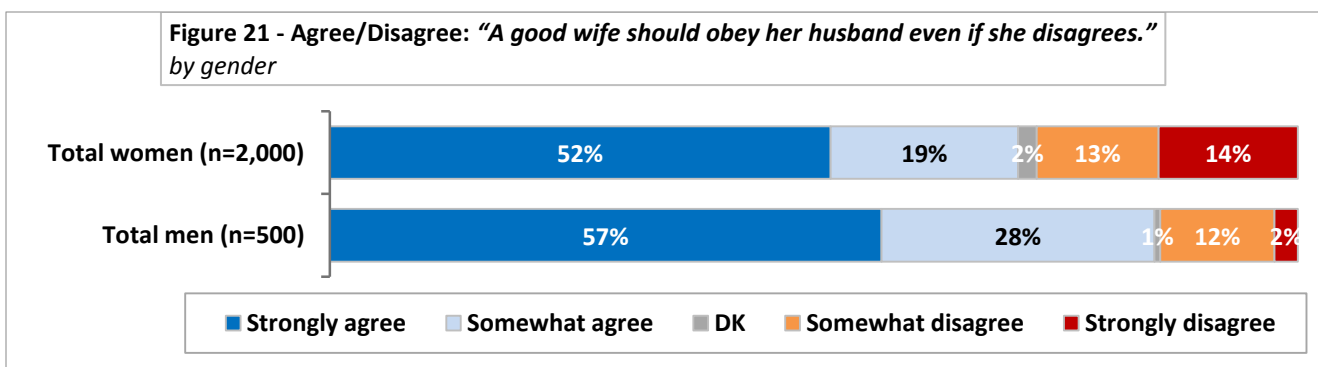
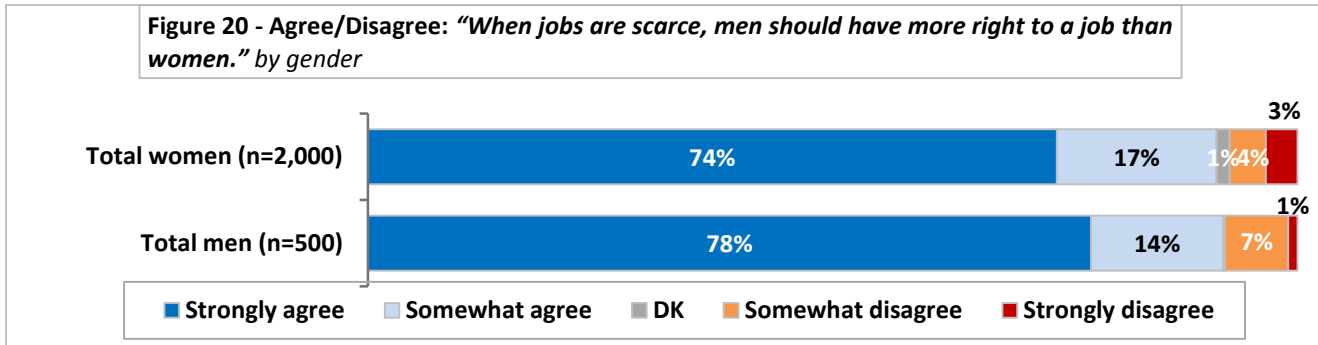


Respondents were then asked a series of statements about different dynamics between women and men and husbands and wives and asked to what extent they agree or disagree. The aim of these questions is to understand how equality-based or “progressive” the respondents’ are on certain issues surrounding gender equality.

- On issues related to equal work opportunities and equal access to education as men and boys, a majority of both men and women strongly/somewhat agree that “Women and girls should have equal access to education as men and boys” (98% and 95%, respectively) (Figure 18) and “Women should have equal work opportunities as men” (97% and 63%, respectively) (Figure 19). In terms of equal work opportunities, however, there is more than a thirty percentage point difference between men and women on agreement with women having equal work opportunities as men.

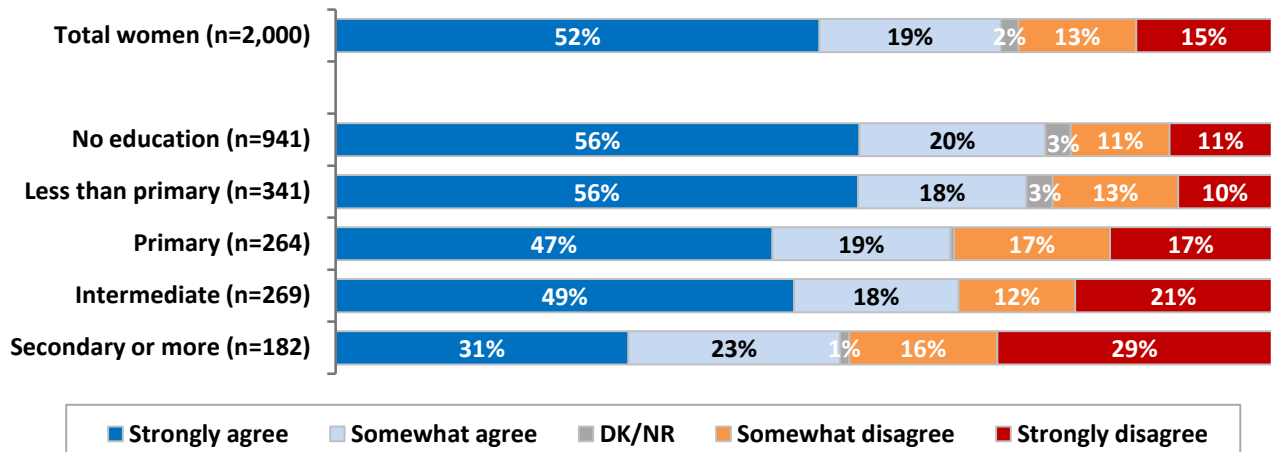


- Also, when asked if men should have more of a right to jobs than women when jobs are scarce (Figure 20) and if a good wife should obey her husband even if she disagrees (Figures 21), a majority of both men and women agree. Nine in ten women (91%) believe men have more right to jobs when jobs are scarce, as do 92% of men. Majorities of men and women believe a good wife should obey her husband even if she disagrees: 71% of women and 85% of men strongly/somewhat agree. Figure 20 and 21 show that men and women have similar outlooks on women’s and wives’ submissive roles in relation to men and husbands. These findings seem to indicate that women may agree to the concept of equal work opportunities, but not if it means being above a man in status or social/professional prestige and not if it means shifting the power balance in the household between husbands and wives.



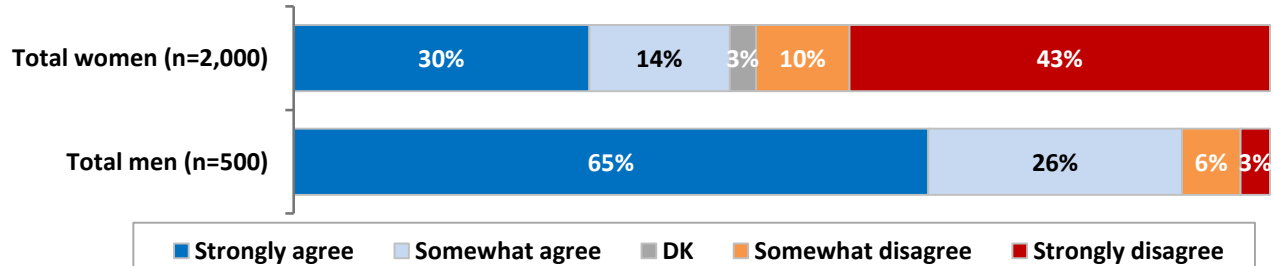
- Between women of different education levels, we do not see statistically significant differences in opinions on these statements except for the issue of wives obeying husbands: as education levels increase, the percentage of women who disagree with this statement also increases (Figure 22).

Figure 22 - Agree/Disagree: "A good wife should obey her husband even if she disagrees."
Percent of women by education levels



- Regarding polygamy, or the ability of men to have more than one wife, there is a difference of opinion on this issue between men and women. A strong 91% of men strongly/somewhat agree it is acceptable for men to have more than one wife, while less than half that percentage of women agree (44%). Indeed, over half of women (53%) strongly/somewhat disagree that it is acceptable for men to have more than one wife versus 9% of men who disagree. (Figure 23).

Figure 23 - Agree/Disagree: "It is acceptable for men to have more than one wife."
by gender



- When aggregating opinions on these five statements related to gender equality and classifying the more equality-based or "progressive" responses, we see women gave progressive responses to more of these statements than men. As seen in Figure 24, 17% of women gave progressive opinions to 4 of the 5 statements compared to only 3% of men. Forty-six percent of women gave progressive opinions to 3 of these statements compared to 20% of men, 33% of women gave progressive opinions to 2 of these statements compared to 44% of men, and 2% of women gave progressive opinions to only 1 of these statements compared to 30% of men. In sum, 65% of women gave progressive responses to 3 out of 5 statements compared with only 23% of men. Only 2% of women and less than 1% of men gave progressive opinions to all 5 of these statements.

Figure 24 - Percentage of “progressive” responses to statements on gender equality <i>Percent by gender</i>	Women (n=2,000)	Men (n=500)
Gave “progressive” responses to 0 statements on gender equality	0.4%	3%
Gave “progressive” responses to 1 statement on gender equality	2%	30%
Gave “progressive” responses to 2 statements on gender equality	33%	44%
Gave “progressive” responses to 3 statements on gender equality	46%	20%
Gave “progressive” responses to 4 statements on gender equality	17%	3%
Gave “progressive” responses to 5 statements on gender equality	2%	0.2%

- Finally, in order to examine the level of control women feel they have over their destiny, we read respondents the statement, *“Some people believe that individuals can decide their own destiny, while others think that it is impossible to escape a predetermined fate. Please tell me which comes closest to your view on this scale.”* Respondents then ranked their viewpoint on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “everything is determined by fate” and 10 means “people shape their fate themselves.” We found that more women fall on the fate side of the scale (62%) rather than the self-determination side (29%). It is of note that 10% of women and 6% of men say they don’t know. Still, the average rank of both men and women are similar, indicating a similar outlook between genders (Figures 25 & 26).

